REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-8 and 10-14 are pending. Claims 1 and 8 have been amended to more fully distinguish over the cited art. Claims 6 and 13 have been amended to correct a typographical error. Claims 2 and 9 have been canceled. Reconsideration is requested.

REJECTIONS

Claims 1, 4-8 and 11-14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) (pre-AIPA) over Scroggie et al. and Claims 3 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Scroggie et al and Yahoo. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Neither of the references identified as prior art by the Examiner allows the consumer to actually change the spending conditions of the coupons they create. If a consumer wished to create a coupon for saving money if and when they spend exactly $55.38 at a specific location or retail channel they can do so. If the consumer decides to change the intended purchase amount from $55.38 to $112.98, the consumer may create a coupon that only provides a savings opportunity if and when they spend exactly $112.98 or more.

Furthermore, if at the very moment a consumer in California was creating a coupon for $47.86, a consumer in New York could be creating a coupon for spending $250.01. Furthermore, if a store owner or manager chooses to set up a pre-determined or random variation of discounts based on every new penny of consumer spending that

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varies based on a multitude of variables such as time, location, original purchase amount entry, they can do so with the present invention, yet not with either of the two systems described in the cited patents.

There is no provision of any kind in either of the references cited that allows the consumer to change the minimum spending requirements of the coupons they wish to create. Nor is there any provision that allows the system to dynamically create and present an additional discount reward if and when the user spends 50%, 75%, 112%, etc. more than they were planning.

This extreme degree of customization is very important in the business of marketing.

It allows retailers to dramatically increase individual's specific level of spending no matter how much the individual who created the coupon was originally intending to spend. The application has statistical evidence that proves their customization methods help to increase individual transaction amounts in store and online by 45%-110%, a huge improvement from traditional couponing methods. It is impossible to create a unique coupon that rewards consumers for specific amounts of spending and subsequently generate additional rewards and incentives to promote greater degrees of spending unless you create a system that captures the intended value of the proposed transaction prior to coupon issuance in order to build an increased incentive instantly based on a higher amount than the specific value entered.

Neither reference identified allows a consumer to enter the amount that they intend on spending. Neither reference describes the process of custom coupon creation based on the imminent value of the proposed sales transaction. Neither reference can effectively prompt an increase in actual spending that is based on an original intended purchase amount. This sophistication and thus innovation in direct consumer marketing cannot be realized through either of the prior art examples cited.

It is very important not to confuse the ability to search a database of coupons by the value of the coupons themselves with the ability to create a custom coupon based on the value of an intended purchase. The value of a coupon is not the same as the value of the intended purchase that can qualify the coupon. Neither of the systems described in either reference makes any mention or use of intended purchase amount data to create unique offers in real time upon request. Furthermore, neither reference mentions or alludes to any mechanism or method that allows retailers to customize discount incentives based on an unending variety possible purchase values.

Scroggie's patent loosely uses the term "purchase parameters" to represent the specific products a user is required to purchase. If we look at figure 12, we can clearly see the limitations of what is Scroggie's definition of "purchase parameters": In section 270 of figure 12, the box for "Consumer Input" is the only section identified that illustrates what specific purchase parameters are needed: 1. "Consumer Name, 2. Coupon Selection, and 3. Supermarket Selection - there is no provision in the illustrations or subsequent language anywhere in the patent to utilize any other type of "purchase information" (with the exception of "past purchase information").

This interpretation is clearly supported and displayed by figure 11, in which a coupon for a static "Buy 1, Get 1 Free" discount is displayed for the purchase of an Arm and Hammer product. The user has no ability to alter the discount offer though any personal spending information, therefore the system is not truly interactive or dynamic. Additionally, the user must buy the specified product to get the benefit of the offer whether they originally wanted to buy that specific product or not.

By contrast, the inventive method does not offer a "collection" of product specific coupons stored in a database for the user to browse through. It does not promote manufacturer-based incentives. It allows a user to create volume purchase based and retailer specific discounts that apply to any product or service a retailer carries so long as the user spends as much as the minimum spending requirement they used to create the discount.
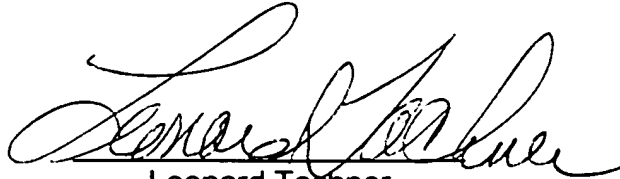
The invention's unique focus is on increasing each and every new total transaction amount by rewarding customers with customized discounts for higher and higher levels of spending. This method is truly interactive and dynamic because the customer changes the data, discounts, minimum spending requirements, etc. to create the unique quality of the offers by the specific data entered.

All of the pending claims have now been amended to emphasize these distinctions. Specifically, the customer determines the coupon discount by specifying the amount he wishes to spend, and in the case of Claim 1, the period of time in which he intends to spend that amount. None of the cited art discloses this unique "dynamic real-time" process of coupon generation. Accordingly, pending claims 1, 3-8 and 10-14 are believed to be patentable over the art of record.

An early allowance is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

Leonard Tachner
Attorney for the Applicant
Registration No. 26,344
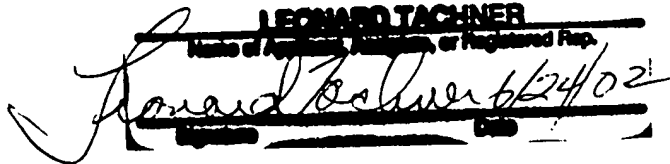Dated: 6/24/02

LT/jm
(949) 752-8525 Telephone
(949) 955-2415 Telefax

CLAIMS

(MARKED UP VERSION)

1.(Amended) A method for providing discount incentives to potential customers for making purchases from service or goods providers; the method comprising the steps of:

providing an internet website for providers [to register and] to set their respective discount parameters for issuing discount coupons to potential customers;

permitting access to said website by said potential customers to [register and search for registered] **select** providers from whom they wish to make purchases;

establishing customer [purchasing parameters] **intended spending amount and period of time** for a selected provider and indicating [a match between] **the corresponding** discount parameters [and purchasing parameters] **for the selected provider**; and

presenting a website display of a **customer** discount coupon corresponding to said [matching] **discount** parameters for printout by a [registered] customer for subsequent redemption at a provider's place of business.

[2. The method recited in claim 1 wherein said matching parameters comprise an amount to be spent by the customer and a specified period of time in which said amount must be spent.]

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3. The method recited in claim 1 wherein said presenting step further comprises the steps of generating a map indicating the location of a selected provider and adding said map to said website display.

4. The method recited in claim 1 further comprising the step of establishing a data file of coupon generation for each said provider.

5. The method recited in claim 1 further comprising the step of including at least one verification number on each said discount coupon.

6.(Amended) The method recited in claim 1 further comprising the step of displaying a search page at said website for permitting a [postponed] **potential** customer to search for a provider based upon selected criteria.

7. The method recited in claim 6 wherein said search criteria comprise at least one criterion taken from the group consisting of location, nature of products offered, nature of services offered and timing of provider registration at said website.

8.(Amended) A method of issuing electronically-generated merchant-specific discount coupons to consumers over an internet communications link; the method comprising the steps of:

establishing an internet website on said link, said website having a selected address;

providing at least one website page for merchants [to register and] to set their respective discount parameters for said discount coupons;

providing at least one website page for consumers to [register and search for registered] **select one of said** merchants [based upon selected search criteria];

providing at least one website page for consumers to indicate their desired [purchase parameters] spending amount;

[comparing] **determining the** discount parameters of a merchant [with purchase parameters of] **based upon the spending amount selected by** a consumer [and indicating when a match of discount parameters and purchase parameters occurs];

presenting a website page having an electronic discount coupon representing the [matching] **discount** parameters for [a particular] **the selected** merchant; and

permitting a consumer to print the presented page for subsequent redemption of [the] **said** discount coupon [represented at said presented website page] **at the selected merchant**.

[9. The method recited in claim 8 wherein said matching parameters comprise an amount to be spent by the consumer and a specified period of time in which said amount must be spent.]

10. The method recited in claim 8 wherein said presenting step further comprises the steps of generating a map indicating the location of a selected merchant and adding said map to said website display.

11. The method recited in claim 8 further comprising the step of establishing a data file of coupon generation for each said merchant.

12. The method recited in claim 8 further comprising the step of including at least one verification number on each said discount coupon.

13.(Amended) The method recited in claim 8 further comprising the step of displaying a search page at said website for permitting a [postponed] **potential** consumer to search for a merchant based upon selected criteria.